

Delphine

AND
OTHER POEMS



L. ADDA NICHOLS.

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Yours very Truly
L. Adda Nichols

DELPHINE

AND

OTHER POEMS

BY
L. ADDA NICHOLS

"It is good for us to think no grace or blessing truly ours
until we are aware God has blessed some one else with it
through us."—*Phillips Brooks.*



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GENERAL. *o-o*

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L. ADDA NICHOLS

TO THE MEMORY OF
FATHER AND MOTHER
THIS BOOK IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED

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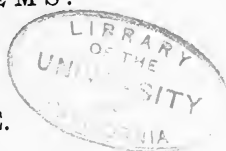
DELPHINE
AND
OTHER POEMS

*If you know a happy song,
Sing it, yes, sing it ;
It will rest some weary heart,
To the sad new life impart ;
So if you know a happy song,
Sing it from the heart.*

*If you know the wondrous story,
Tell it, yes, tell it ;
If you love the Lord of glory,
If you love the old, old story,
The story of redeeming love,
Tell it from the heart.*

DELPHINE
AND
OTHER POEMS.

DELPHINE.



Here flows the smiling Manistee
Leisurely onward toward the sea ;
And winding through the hills along,
Fills all the valley with sweet song
Of rippling waves that smile and kiss
Its own green banks with nature's bliss ;
Until at last it pours its charms
Into the broad Pacific's arms.
Now mirrored in its depths so clear
The fleecy, floating clouds appear ;
And toward the setting of the sun
Upon a summer afternoon,
A glowing picture one oft sees
Reflected from o'erhanging trees
From farther bank, like gleams of fire,—
Naught's left of beauty to desire.
Its waves doth many secrets keep
For those who dream and those who weep ;

And 'neath the bridge so grey and old
Hath heard the story often told
Of love and grief, of pain and loss,
So deep that nothing but the Cross
Of Calvary could heal and bless
With its own balm of tenderness
The weary hearts that long and wait
The opening of the unseen gate.
Dear Manistee ! for aye flow on ;
The pride of one small country town,
That nestles by thy purling stream,
Among the hills where poets dream ;
And where life's nobler after-thought
Outside the world of strife is wrought.

Here where the wheels of labor sound,
And honest thought and peace abound,
And laborers with the sinewy hand
And stalwart frame respect command,
Fair Delphine lies. What memories flame
At mention of this cherished name ;
Of faithful friends of other days
Who dwelt among these quiet ways,

And by the social, bright fireside
Exchange of thought new themes supplied.
Thus while around the cheerful fire
The huge logs burned still higher and higher
And threw such genial glow apace
As lighted up each eager face.

One friend by full consent had gained
Name of "the Master"; for he reigned
Unconsciously and with sweet zest;
His years outnumbering the rest;
And from the love-light in his eyes
Bespoke a nature meekly wise.
Of him it was devoutly said,
Who much of God and nature read:
"His present seems a dream to be,
The future his reality."

A younger and a growing light
See in this fireside group at night,
George Markham; pastor in the place;
Whose creed is written in his face;
And you could read it from the start:
"Heaven and earth not far apart."

One person hard to be described,
Who of full measure had imbibed
Of gospel truth, of wit and grace,
And in the group held central place.
A man who spoke in homely phrase,
Uncultured, only in the ways
Of heaven-taught truth ; a speaker bold,
Who won the hearts of young and old,
David Rook ; gardener and friend,
Whose common work serves highest end.

One of this club of five we see
A business man of high degree ;
While from the city for short stay
Had to this fireside found his way.

And let us now acquaintance make
With one McColl ; all for the sake
Of others who like him may roam
In darkness, and to light may come.

Invigorating breezes flow
Through trees of pine, inviting so

The seekers after health to try
The simple remedies that lie
In change and rest ; thus some have come
To make Delphine awhile their home ;
And list to woodland music free
Beside the rippling Manistee.
This guest, McColl, a sadness wore ;
Oppressive grief was brooding o'er
His very life ; a sorrow dark
Entwined with doubts had crushed the spark
Of hope's last ray and faith and trust ;
" If there's a God he can't be just,"
He moaned ; " O where's my wife, my boy ?
Is there a heaven ? a place of joy ?
Or is there not ? and do they sleep
Forever in oblivion deep ?
A home once bright with childish glee,
And ruled by queenly dignity,
In one brief day forever fled,
And all life's hopes lie crushed and dead ;
What mockings at my longings come,
A waiting drear and dread and dumb."

George Markham in his study bent
With pen in hand and thought intent
Upon the Sunday sermon there,
That none might lack their needed share
Of comfort and instruction given
In the sweet message sent from heaven
To those who from the factory come,
And from the simple rural home
To rest their weary hands and mind,
And some new gospel treasure find ;
And be, through words that he should speak,
“ Willing to live another week.”

Meanwhile McColl had wandered out,
And half unconsciously, no doubt,
Had found him at the study door
Where he had been oftentimes before.
The pastor hearty welcome gave,
But noted his pale face and grave ;
With lines of sorrow deeper laid
Since first his prized acquaintance made.
But interruptions courted he
If he could help a soul at sea.

This man of culture, traveled wide,
A man of wealth and seeming pride,
But noble character possessed ;—
With honest doubts a soul distressed.

When with exchange of pleasant word,
And from the grate the fire was stirred,
McColl the question had essayed
To ask what subject he'd arrayed
For coming sermon, "that I see
Is brushed aside, for which blame me."
"'Tis time to rest," Markham replied,—
"My subject's one that's deep and wide ;
No less than 'The significance
And use of sorrow' ; which perchance
May find response with some who've wrought
The problem out, or thus have sought."
McColl remarked with bitterness :
"You'll talk ten minutes more or less,
Then give it up for other theme,
Or some more visionary dream."
"Nay, nay, my friend, but rather I

Had thought discourse to multiply ;
The theme so vast now on my hand
Seems wonderfully to expand.

Now my belief, as you may know,
Is in two worlds united so,
Though one the other cannot see,
In speaking distance they may be.”
Then from his library shelf he took
A well-worn, unpretending book,
And from its pages to him read
A little story, which, he said,
Expressed his faith. It runs this way :
There is an island, so they say,
Inhabited by fishermen
In low rude huts ; and often when
Through fog and mist they can't discern
Their own loved dwellings, nor dare turn
Their boats too near the rocky shore,
Their voice in song is wafted o'er ;
Then wives and sweethearts take again
The next verse of the sweet refrain ;
And thus they know, though all unseen,

That no great distance lies between ;
And they can well with patience stay
Until the mists are cleared away.

“I can’t accept it,” hoarsely said
His guest, and sadly shook his head ;
“The theory sounds well to read,
But can’t be true ; ah, no, indeed !”

“ But, friend, supposing it were true,
Would it not be worth much to you ?
And do you not think it worth while
To study it, and thus beguile
Your weary hours of grief and pain,
And from it consolation gain ?
And find it not unreasonable,
But, rather, true and beautiful ?
If we can’t rend the veil and see,
It’s no less true that there may be,
Not far away, the other shore,
And heavenly greetings wafted o’er ;
Beyond our human eyes to reach,

Or human ears to hear the speech ;
But faith can see, and faith can hear,
And thus bring unseen treasures near."

A gleam of hope a moment shone
Across his face, and then was gone ;
With grasp of hand he said "Good night,"
Then passed into the street from sight.

Now once a week, it was agreed,
This friendly "Club of Delphine," freed
From all restraint, should meet and share
Each other's thoughts, and notes compare.
The parsonage to be the place
This genial company should grace;
And from the pastor's study flow
Rich blessings after years should know
From "speaking meetings," if you please,
Where each one felt at perfect ease,
Discussing social topics when
Seemed drawn that way, and now and then
Of politics they took a view,
All with good nature through and through.

But mostly valued time was spent
On higher themes, with the intent
To help McColl, now in the night
Of unbelief, to clearer sight.
And one strong element to guide
Was David Rook, who could divide
The living truth in homely way ;
He sent his arrows swift to stay,
Until beyond all argument
His simple faith had gained assent.
"Too much theology," would say
Our gardener quaint and in his way,
"And not enough religion found,
Sometimes to hardly go around.
About the creeds Christ little said,
But very much of *love* instead."
The Master silent sat the while,
And nodded with approving smile.

McColl then spoke: "I'd like to know,
If you've a God that loves us so,
Why He should such afflictions send,
And weight of burden that it bend

And crush our very life apart,
And wrench and tear the human heart
Till hope is dead, yet death won't come
To free the soul with anguish dumb.
Then you on love and faith expand;
I surely cannot understand
A faith so blind; but wonder, doubt,
Concerning things past finding out."

" Well, now," said David, " let me tell
An incident remembered well ;
Crossing a lake, some time ago,
A fog and mist had settled low
And thick about; we could not see
Across the deck, and thought that we
Were in much danger, when I went
To see the Captain and give vent
Unto my feelings of great fear ;
Where he was standing I drew near :
' Are you not going at full speed ?'
' Certainly, my friend, there's need
That I on time the trip should make ;
No cause that I the record break.'

'Is it not dangerous?' I ask;
For recklessness took him to task.
'I care not for the fog,' said he,
'The compass is our guide at sea;
Always by that our course we take;
'Twas never known to make mistake;
Through fog and mist, through night and day,
The needle always points one way.'
'And can you tell me why 'tis so?'
'I surely can't, nor do I know,
And never yet have heard of one
Could tell just how the work was done.'
'And yet you trust your life, and feel
Secure with that one bit of steel?'
'Yes, every time; because I know
It's o'er and o'er been proven true;
Hundreds of years it has been tried,
Has never failed, has never lied.
The mighty ships the waters plow,
Laden with wealth from stern to bow,
And trusted to the needle's eye,
Not knowing the wherefore nor why;
We trust what we can't understand

Each day we live, on sea or land.'
Thus spake the Captain. I withdrew,
Knowing that what he said was true."

McColl sank back into his chair,
Silent, but with more hopeful air;
George Markham stirred the waning fire,
And while the sparks and flames rise higher
And fill with cheerful light the room,
Their conversation they resume,
Led by the Master; and with him
The business man of mirth and vim
The company oft entertained,
And thus the interest never waned.
The moments swiftly fly, and when
The clock rang out the hour of ten,
They rose to go: each one possessed
A growing friendship for the rest.
And David thought, but left unsaid—
"To-night a cornerstone's been laid."

"To-morrow's sun shines on to-day;
Thus easily we climb the way

That otherwise so rough and steep
Our feet from stumbling could not keep.
'Tis just ahead we look for rest,
That makes the present stand the test;
And so with dauntless courage we
Press on to final victory.”
Thus spake the Master when around
The hearth again the Club was found;
The thoughts that led to these remarks
Were like the scattered flying sparks
Brushed off when in the grate we turn
The log to make it brighter burn.
Each one contributed a share
To make the hour a profit bear
To one and all, each in his sphere,
And thus the moments brought good cheer.
They talked of ruling kings of earth,
Of fame and wealth, and what they're worth.
Then, running o'er with gratitude,
Spoke David in his joyful mood:
“My friends, I doubt if you can guess
The wondrous riches I possess;
The beauty of the world is mine,

The multitude of stars that shine,
The moon with all her silvery light,
And all the glories of the night;
The woodlands and the birds of song
To me without reserve belong.
Ah, yes! I own the Manistee,"
Continued David, cheerily;
"The scenery along its banks
I take and give the Father thanks;
And all the range of hills that rise,
And over which the sunshine lies;
While through the trees the crimson glow
Lights up the peaceful vale below.
With all the wealth of Cræsus I
Could not one-tenth these beauties buy
That now I take as gift so free
From God's own hand of love to me.
They're mine to hold while life shall last,
Then mine a heritage more vast.
In Christ's last will and testament
To me the blessed news was sent
That to immortal life I'm heir,
Within the many mansions fair

Where He's prepared for me a place,
And I shall see Him face to face.
Thus to a blessed home in heaven
To me a title deed is given ;
A document no court can break ;
Sealed with His name and for His sake
Who on the Cross of Calvary
Hath purchased this great wealth for me.
This postscript doth the will attend :
'Lo, I am with you to the end.'
To David Rook the deed stands sure
To mansions that for aye endure,
Who dwells at present in Delphine,
To him's addressed each precious line.
O friends ! can you now estimate
The value of my great estate ?"

George Markham smiled, for well he knew
The words came from a heart that's true.
But we shall equal heirship claim
All in and through the one great name,
He said ; and thus the talk ran on
Until the time was almost gone,

And with reluctance must adjourn;
But not until the coffee urn
With steaming beverage passed around
And glad recipients had found.

As when the faintest streaks of light,
At early dawn, foretell the night
Is fast receding, and the Star
Of Morning shines above the bar
Of growing crimson that will soon
Be lost in the resplendent noon,
So with McColl 'tis break of day;
The shadows lift, and far away,
Though dimly, he begins to see
The meaning of faith's ministry.

"That we've a Friend," the Master said,
Always in reach, has comforted
More hearts than eloquence of prayer
Addressed to One we know not where.
The Man of Sorrows, knowing grief,
Can best give human hearts relief;
And, perfect made through suffering,
Can unto others healing bring;

Who triumphed in temptation's hour,
Can to the tempted give like power;
And since with Christ the victory
Was gained in dark Gethsemane,
More than his miracles to us
His earthly life and lifted Cross
Whereon He paid redemption's price,
The one great living sacrifice;
And thus to heaven was made complete
The path where trod His sacred feet.
His footprints through the ages trace
That storms of centuries can't efface;
And in His steps whoever will
May find the pathway shining still.
Through prayer unuttered or expressed
The prayerful heart is always blessed,
And feels the Christ so near to them
That they can touch His garment's hem;
To trust the leading of His hand
A little child can understand."
George Markham breathed a low "amen";
McColl the same repeated; then,
With heart o'erflowing at the word,
David added: "Yes, praise the Lord!"

The Master's line of tender thought
Had to the mind of Markham brought
Some promises that always shine
From Revelation's sacred mine;
And so before his friends he brings
The outline of his ponderings.

To him that overcometh, I
With hidden manna will supply;
To him that hath an ear to hear
The Spirit ever speaketh clear;
And they that understand shall own
A new name written in white stone,
Which no man knoweth saving he
To whom's revealed the mystery;
The simple token of a friend
That one the other doth commend.
With rich embellishment is fraught
Each wide-extending Scripture thought.
When those in ancient Athens tried
Acquittal gained, 'twas signified,
And dicast's verdict was made known,
Just by the white and unpierced stone.

When each in turn his thought expressed,
With growing interest manifest,
David, in his peculiar way
And emphasis, went on to say :
“ The world will never think the less
Of those who live what they profess.
'Tis grander far, my friends, to do,
Than merely to believe what's true.
On truth that's practical the Book
Has ever taught the world to look.
So each strange face that meets my view,
I simply think, I hope that you
Are one whose swift and willing feet
Are for the dear Lord's use made meet ;
On mercy's errands oft will go,
And thus your love to Him will show.
Much of our sorrow we forget
If busy for the King we're kept.”

“ O, is it true ? ” said, half aloud,
McColl, as low his head was bowed ;
“ I really think I've selfish been,
And can He count it less than sin ?

To turn about 'tis not too late,
'For lo,' One says, 'I knock and wait.' "
Whispered Markham: "His promise claim,
And yours the white stone with new name."

A moment's silence; when they drew
Their chairs the fireside closer to,
The Master led them in his way
To view a picture by Doré
That once he saw. With pictured word
Their hearts with admiration stirred;
And when, within the gallery led,
The canvas he before them spread,
So plain he made it they could trace
The heart's desire upon each face.
"The Vale of Tears,"—thus vividly
Shows forth life's sad reality.
The background dark, which is immense,
A shadowy valley represents;
And at the entrance, clothed in white,
The Savior stands, with form upright,
Bearing a cross; and with one hand
Upraised; by which we understand
Is invitation; arched around

His head, soft rays of light are found,
Thus symbolizing as we see
Hope's presence even here may be.
The middle and foreground are full
Of a great number typical
Of weary, heavy laden ones,
From beggars e'en to kings on thrones.
A king in glorious cloth of gold
Turns in despair, and to behold
Beseechingly Christ's face; and near
Him stands a Roman Emperor,
Whose brow still bears the laurel wreath,
With toga stained with blood beneath,
From heart-wound by his enemies
Inflicted through mad jealousies.
The maimed, the halt, the blind are there;
A dying mother to His care
Commends her child of tender years,
With pleading look and flowing tears.
On solitary shelf of rock
Despised and hated lepers flock;
And from whatever depth of loss,
All look to Christ and to His Cross.

Without a word of comment made
Upon the picture thus portrayed,
And made indelible within
The mind of each, they now begin
Their hats and overcoats to take,
And with a hearty, warm hand-shake
The club adjourns; with a "good-night"
They step out in the clear starlight.

God works through men; and they who heed
The great commission find indeed
A satisfaction that extends
And is complete in this: His friends.
And he who lifts to purer air
Of heaven a soul in deep despair
Does work as high as angels do,
And through a means they never knew.
'Tis thus McColl has dared commend
His life unto the world's best Friend;
And from the faith-light in his face
Proves heaven a state as well as place;
That near by is the heavenly home

Where loved ones wait for him to come.
By consecration full, all doubt
Has from his heart been taken out,
And heaven's all transcendent light
Has swallowed up his darkest night.
While his frail body still declines
The help of breezes from the pines
And from the hillsides that surround
Dear Delphine; and while he's not found
What here he sought that would make whole
His earthly frame, yet for his soul
He's found the rest longed for and sweet,
The rest eternal, full, complete;
And eager expectations shine
Within his eyes words can't define.

How pleasantly and swiftly passed
The weeks; and this must be the last
Fond meeting, when the Club adjourns.
Each guest unto his home returns
Upon the morrow; so they this eve
Mostly to reminiscence give.

And hardly now do they begin
When light refreshments are brought in ;
The fragrant coffee and the tea,
Emblems of sociability;
And thoughts of parting find no place
To mar the evening's cheerfulness.
An added interest, by the way,
This meeting holds; 'tis the birthday
Of David Rook, who cheerily
Proclaims that he is sixty-three;
"In hailing distance now, almost,
Of yonder shore and heavenly host."
Congratulations all extend
To him, their much respected friend;
Whose noble, open, manly face
Would banish gloom from any place;
Who never let his left hand know
Of aught of good his right would do;
But often said, "Nothing is small;
All things are great, for God made all.
That life," he said, "is much like this.
I think, except that I shall miss

My rheumatism over there,
And that, I know, I well can spare;
And heaven's rest will be more dear
For pain and loss we've suffered here."

"Since coming here I'm led to see
All work is honored equally
If honest and well done"—thus spake
The man of business—"and I take
Fresh courage, since 'the Master' said
Religion and business should be wed;
That they are like the different strands
Of one strong rope; and if it stands
United thus, it surely would
Uphold the world and make it good.
On church and warehouse God bestows
An equal blessing; and so those
Who work in either must believe
An equal recompense receive;
And what is preached on Sunday must
On Monday be a sacred trust.
All service true is for the Lord,
And always brings its own reward."

“ Speaking of service,” Markham said,
“ When but a child I often read
And loved the legend sweet and old
Of good St. Christopher, the bold,
Tall giant at the river’s side,
Where flows the mighty rolling tide;
And neither ford nor bridge is found
To help the pilgrims hither bound
All on their way to Rome; no lack
The faithful find; for on his back
Each one St. Christopher bears o’er
The waters deep to farther shore.
Prevailed upon he could not be
To ever take the smallest fee
When to the Holy City they
Found help from him upon their way.
When in the service he’d grown old,
One night, as winds blew fierce and cold,
A plaintive voice and of a child
Rang out upon the air so wild:
‘ O, dear, good Saint, I thee implore
To carry me the river o’er.’
Though weary and in need of sleep,

Nothing could from his loved work keep
This faithful one; and so he takes
The child upon his back, and makes,
With staff in hand, as oft before,
His passage to the other shore;
But when mid-way the waters through
So very great his burden grew,
And heavier, till he almost sank
Before he reached the farther bank.
Great drops of sweat began to pour
From off his brow as ne'er before.
At last, with staggering footsteps, he
Has reached the shore, and tenderly
Upon the bank he places now
The child; when lo, around his brow
Beams suddenly a radiant light !
The Savior of the world that night
He carried on his shoulders broad,—
The world's weight with the Son of God.

“ Only a legend, but we find
In it a golden truth enshrined;
That humble service meaneth much,

And bringeth heaven and earth in touch;
And he who for his fellow cares
Thus serves the Lord, though unawares.
Dearer than legend to you and me
Christ's loving wayside ministry,
Of which he bids us all partake,
The work continue for His sake
Who of His best gave to the few,
Or only one, as like unto
The lonely woman at the well,
Who straightway doth the glad news tell.
In all His weary journeyings
The word of life He always brings,
That each lone wayfarer may find
In Him a friend most wondrous kind."
"Ah, yes," then spake McColl, "and me,
Like blind Bartimæus, makes to see;
And He who at the midnight hour
To Nicodemus with such power
The truth proclaimed, shall one day greet
The whole glad world brought to His feet."

Now with these words a silence reigned
Until their thoughts the heights attained.

And then, to break the magic spell
 Of thoughtfulness that on them fell,
 The Master says: "There comes to me
 To-night a scene most vividly
 Of nature's untold grandeur vast;
 An impress made while life shall last.
 When through the Alps of Switzerland
 We journeyed, a congenial band,
 We climbed the glaciers with a guide;
 To him and to each other tied
 We made the slippery, steep ascent;
 But slowly, firmly as we went,
 Our guide a chiseled niche would make
 To place his foot, and bade us take
 Great caution, and to put within
 Each niche our foot where his had been;
 And thus our safety guaranteed
 By giving to his counsel heed.
 When at the height of ice and snow
 Our guide cried out, 'Now look below,
 And at your right!' The great abyss
 Of foaming waters seethe and hiss,
 And, dashing o'er their rocky bed,

Thousands of feet beneath our tread,
A dizziness bring to the brain;—
When 'To your left, look up!' again
Our guide pealed forth; a lofty height
Of granite mountain met our sight;
Thus firm, unmovable and grand,
It seemed like grasp of unseen hand
To save us from the depths below,
Where feet unguided else might go.
And in the midst I pondered thus:
That gulf, temptation is to us,
Whose mighty waves would overwhelm
Had we no Pilot at the helm.
The mountain at the left, God's truth,
A tower of strength to age and youth;
A sheltering rock in desert land,
A refuge that for aye shall stand.
Its depths all goodness underlies;
Its summit reaches to the skies.
To find life's goal a surety is
To place our feet where Christ placed His;
And in His footprints safely climb
Above the changing waves of time."

The fire burns low within the grate;
Our social friends have lingered late;
And when, with slow, commanding power,
The clock peals forth the midnight hour,
The Delphine Club again adjourns;
Each to his separate way returns.

BORROWED.

The deepest thoughts ne'er find a voice
Till touched by sorrow;
The sweetest music on the earth
From grief we borrow.

The grandest truths that find a place
On written pages
Are found within or borrowed from
The Book of Ages.

The clouds that send refreshing rain
In bounteous portion
Give back what they have borrowed from
The mighty ocean.

Naught stands alone and separate
In full completeness;
The fragrant flower must yield to use
Its honeyed sweetness.

New light from out the old-time truths
 To-day is springing;
And echoes from the distant past
 Through earth are ringing.

As it has been, so it will be,
 And each to-morrow
From out the golden yesterdays
 Makes haste to borrow.

A LOST OPPORTUNITY.

It came and went so quickly,
My sluggish soul saw not
The Master stand and beckoning
Toward one of humble lot.

And I rose not up to follow,
So slow was I to see,
Till the help I might have given
Forever fled from me.

And often I am grieving,
And longing all in vain
For a blessed opportunity
That will not come again.

Dear Lord ! give Thine anointing,
And make mine eyes to see;
And make me swift in doing
The work Thou givest me.

AT CHURCH.

A TRUE INCIDENT.

The morning prayer was ended ;
 And as the pastor read
 Of the fullness of God's mercy,
 And the loving words Christ said,

Then tenderly applied them
 As a remedy for sin,
 Lo! at the open window
 A little dove flew in.

At the pastor's feet alighted,
 And looked up in his face,
 As if with approbation ;
 And sacred seemed the place.

O'er all the congregation
 A solemn stillness fell ;
 Each tender heart was melted
 By the calm and holy spell.

And then amidst the reading
The pastor paused and said :
May this dove be an omen
Of good unto us led ;

As a message to this people,
Sent from the Father above,
As a token of His pleasure
And everlasting love.

Thro' all the morning service
The dove as sentinel stood
By the pulpit and the altar,
An interpreter of good.

After the benediction,
Lightly flew the bird,
And rested on the shoulder
Of him who preached the word.

From thence upon the pulpit,
On the Bible perched at last ;
And gently watched the people
As they slowly outward passed.

So like the calm that follows
 After the storm doth cease,
Comes the spirit as a dove,
 With the olive-branch of peace.

JESUS PASSED BY.

A famous man of letters sighed
O'er many a problem deep,
To which he'd given days of toil
And hours of needed sleep.

The only world he knew was books,
And not the world of men ;
Thus human pleading reached him not,
Nor human woe nor pain.

While bending o'er his weary task,
And lifting not his eye,
Lo ! all unheeded and unseen
The loving Christ passed by.

And still he digged and delved to solve
Unfathomed mystery ;
While all the throbbing world moved on,
Nor paused his work to see.

Some fainted 'neath their burden great
For cheering words unsaid;
But still he plied his heavy task
With bowed and reverend head.

And dreamed not that the secret dwelt
In the multitude so vast,
And in the heart of grief and care
The loving Christ had passed.

The rich man counted o'er his gold,
And longed and grasped for more;
And every day was added gain
To his ever growing store.

The months and years roll swiftly by
With an unvarying speed;
He never dreamed, with all his wealth,
That he was poor indeed.

And while he piled his treasures high,
And counted one by one,
Behold a stranger fair had passed,
The Christ had come and gone.

So one and all, on some task bent,
We look not up, but down;
In raking earthly dust and straws
See not the lifted crown.

Thus blessed opportunities
Fail to attract the eye,
And all unheeded till we feel
That Jesus has passed by.

SUNDAY MORNING.

Each Sunday morn proclaims a risen Lord ;
An oft recurring Easter day of light ;
And o'er the quiet rural village rests
Heaven's sweetest benediction at the dawn
Of this God's holy day.

And when the sun,
Advancing in his course, the zenith nears,
The church-bell chimes call to the house of prayer.
No rich, no poor, but all with one accord
As members of one household here unite
In worship of the one great God of love.
And with the organ's ringing tones are joined
The voices of the worshipers in hymns
Wedded to tunes that shall forever live,
And will be sung till time shall be no more ;
Dear "Arlington" and "Coronation" grand,
That stirred the souls of saints of long ago.

Then in petitions at the throne of grace
The pastor pleads for blessings on the flock :
Have any wandered from the fold away ?
Have any never known the love divine ?
Are any weary with their load of sin ?
It was for such the Shepherd gave His life.
O bring them back within the fold to-day,
To rest beneath the shadow of the Cross;
And evermore Thy name shall have the praise.

The Scripture reading then the silence broke :
“ Let not your heart be troubled,” came the words,
The blessed, tender words from John fourteen;
Through centuries sweet comfort have they brought
To souls distressed ; and to the longing heart
Glad promises of “ many mansions ” fair.

Through panes of tinted glass the sunlight streams
And sheds a mellow light across the pews ;
Lights up with peace the face of hoary age,
And little children smile beneath the rays ;
While every face bespeaks deep gratitude
For blessings past and blessings of to-day ;
True witnesses of God’s unchanging love.

Now toward the sacred desk all eyes are turned
For text recorded in the Book of books;
When lo, from John fourteen the pastor reads
Christ's words: I am the way, the truth, the life.

"I am the way." No other way is known
Wherein earth's pilgrims safe may journey on
Through sorrow's night or wild temptation's storm
And reach at last the endless joys of home.

"I am the truth." The question that of old
Perplexed the sages oft is answered here
Complete and full. Who knows the Christ knows
truth;

Then doubt no more, O troubled heart, but find
In Him the mystery solved and be at peace.

"I am the life." What is so dear as life,
Or promise sweet as life that never ends?
Rich gift from Him who died but rose again,
And thus forever more hath power to say
"I am the life."

With closing hymn of praise,
And with bowed heads the benediction given,
The people pass from out the sacred place.
One service less on earth for them to share ;
One morning nearer to the courts above ;
A little nearer to earth's journey's end ;
And nearer loved ones lost from sight awhile,
But loving still.

O blessed Sabbath morn !
We hail thy peaceful hours and hallowed joys ;
The calm that reigns o'er nature's wide domain ;
In pleasant pastures green the cattle graze,
And groves are ringing with the song of birds.
The bending forests and the blooming fields
Do but show forth the wisdom and the power
That formed their grandeur and their beauty gave.
The azure sky through fleecy clouds looks down ;
The day-star shines and over all is *peace*.

"THE SWORD OF THE LORD AND OF GIDEON."

'Tis night ; and the hosts of Midian
Are down in the valley asleep ;
Their strong men dreaming of victory—
Of glory they're waiting to reap.

Down in the valley of Jezreel,
Asleep ; and their shields and spears
Are glistening now in the moonlight,
With naught suggestive of fears.

With their plunder and camels about them,
The Midianites take their ease ;
Nor dream of approaching danger,
Or of God's allwise decrees.

O never did Mount Gilboa
Stand witness to such a sight !—
To so large a host stand sentinel,
As on that eventful night.

But now the decisive moment
 Brings a small but conquering band ;
 And over the hills and valleys
 Sounds forth the startling command :

"The sword of the Lord and of Gideon !"
 Rings out on the clear night air ;
 With lamps and pitchers and trumpets,
 Lo ! Israel's army draws near.

Only the faithful three hundred ;
 But sufficient to scatter the foe ;
 With God and the right in battle,
 All the enemy's ranks lie low.

Behold ! the signal is given:
 "Blow ye the trumpets !" 'tis done ;
 And with the strangest artillery
 The soldiers of Gideon won.

"The sword of the Lord and of Gideon !"
 We may hear the call to-day ;
 While the sound of the Gospel trumpet
 Peals forth to prepare the way

For the coming and for the reigning
Of the Prince of Righteousness ;
For the vanquishing of all evil,
And the blessed dawn of peace.

The brave are summoned and sifted,
For not in numbers lies strength ;
But they whom the Lord hath chosen
Shall garner the harvest at length.

The few, like Gideon's army,
With Jehovah hath e'er sufficed ;
And the earth becomes the kingdom
Of our Lord and of His Christ.

INASMUCH.

Inasmuch as time is fleeting,
And eternity is long,
Inasmuch as many sorrows
Intermingle with our song,
We would better grasp the moments,
Use them as they swiftly fly,
Making of them sheaves all golden
For the harvest by and by.

Inasmuch as good and evil
Wait each spirit at demand,
Inasmuch as many falter,
Missing oft the guiding hand,
We would better lend, if may be,
Our small aid while they are nigh,
It will help to make the reaping
Sweeter in the by and by.

Inasmuch as 'mong life's roses
There is many an ugly thorn,
Inasmuch as pain and pleasure
With each human soul are born,
We would better pluck the roses,
Though the thorns may pierce us sore,
We would better claim the treasures,
Make them ours forevermore.

Inasmuch as life is ever
Filled with conflicts fierce and strong,
Inasmuch as truth will sometime
Surely vanquish all the wrong,
We would better help to hasten
On the glad and joyous day;
It will make the resting sweeter
If we labor while we may.

Inasmuch as great achievements
Only can be won by few,
Inasmuch as earthly laurels
May not come to me nor you,
We would better do what labor
Daily meets us at each hand,
Nor be idly waiting ever
For some greater to command.

Inasmuch as we have rendered
Good unto the least that be,
"So, indeed," says Christ the Master
"Ye have done it unto Me."
What reward more great or mighty
Need we ever hope to win,
If with this most gracious welcome,
Pearly gates we enter in ?

THE ANGEL OF PATIENCE.

The days are so short, said the toiler ;
 It's hurry and worry and fret ;
And the prize that waits my coming
 Remains in the distance yet ;
There's no rest for the brain so weary,
 No rest for the aching feet ;
But they tell me on fame's high summit
 The earth-life is made complete ;
So I work and worry and struggle
 From early morn until late ;—
A voice beside him spoke softly,
 The Angel of Patience said "*Wait.*"

The days are so long, said the idler ;
 This world's a dreary old place ;
There's nothing here worth the taking,
 There's nothing but time will erase ;
Even my dreams bring no pleasure,
 A sham is the world of mankind ;

Thus idly I wait for the ending
Of the farce where the players are blind ;
'This life is a great disappointment,
And failure in all things doth lurk ; —
A voice beside him spoke loudly,
The Angel of Patience said "*Work.*"

The days are so sad, said the mourner,
The world's full of sorrow and grief ;
All in vain do I look for the day-break,
And continually sigh for relief ;
No joy do I find in the spring-time,
Nor beauty in summer's full bloom ;
The earth is a great barren desert,
Naught's real but death and the tomb ;
The clouds hang so heavy above me,
There's surely more darkness than day ; —
A voice beside him spoke sweetly,
The Angel of Patience said "*Pray.*"

The days are so full, said the faithful ;
And let them be short, sad or long,
I'll do the best thing that's next to me,
And cheer all my labor with song ;
This dear old world's full of beauty,
The harvest is fruitful and fair ;
In waiting and working and praying,
I surely will gather my share
To lay at the feet of the Master
In yonder bright heavenly home ;—
A voice beside him spoke gladly,
The Angel of Patience said "*Come.*"

WORDS MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME.

Dreaming to-night in the firelight's glow,
Sweet saintly faces come and go,
And through the years come softly stealing
The tender words my mother said,
As she nightly kissed and tucked me
Close within my trundle bed :—
“ Now darkness shades the distant hills,
The little birds are hid and still ;
And we a quiet sleep may take,
For our Creator is awake.”

The childlike song my spirit thrills,—
“ Now darkness shades the distant hills ;”
He who keeps the birds from falling
Keepeth thee through fear and pain ;
And then soothingly and softly
Comes her gentle voice again :
“ 'Tis sweet upon my little bed
To think the Savior guards my head ;
And He a helpless child can keep
Through all the silent hours of sleep.”

I backward turn the leaves and look
At the first pages of life's book ;
And now as then her words repeating :
 " And He a helpless child can keep,"
I calmly rest in childhood's faith
 " Through all the silent hours of sleep."
 " Now darkness shades the distant hills,
 The little birds are hid and still ;
 And we a quiet sleep may take,
 For our Creator is awake."

THE BENEDICTION.

“Grace, mercy and peace,” the pastor said,
At the close of the Sabbath day,
“Be with you now and evermore.”
And the people went their way,
From Sabbath rest to week-day work ;
And I wondered if the spell
Of the blessed benediction given
Would guard their footsteps well
From dangers seen and unseen oft
That crowd a busy life ;
Would the blessed peace of the Master calm
The fever and the strife ?

“Grace, mercy and peace,” three living words
Of sweetness and of power ;
O linger with us evermore,
As on the Sabbath hour ;
“Grace,” that giveth strength, when fails
The help of human hand ;
“Peace,” that calms the troubled heart,
Ever at Christ’s command ;
“Mercy,” that cometh from above,
Earth’s weary ones to bless,
And spreads o’er all its healing wings,
The wings of tenderness.”



NOTE.

If any doubting soul shall be led to a stronger faith in Christ, or the shadows be lifted from any sorrowing heart, that the light of heavenly truth and love shine in, by the reading of this little book, it will have fulfilled its mission.

For some of the thoughts and incidents contained in "Delphine" I am indebted to Rev. George H. Hepworth and Bishop Breyfogle.

L. A. N.

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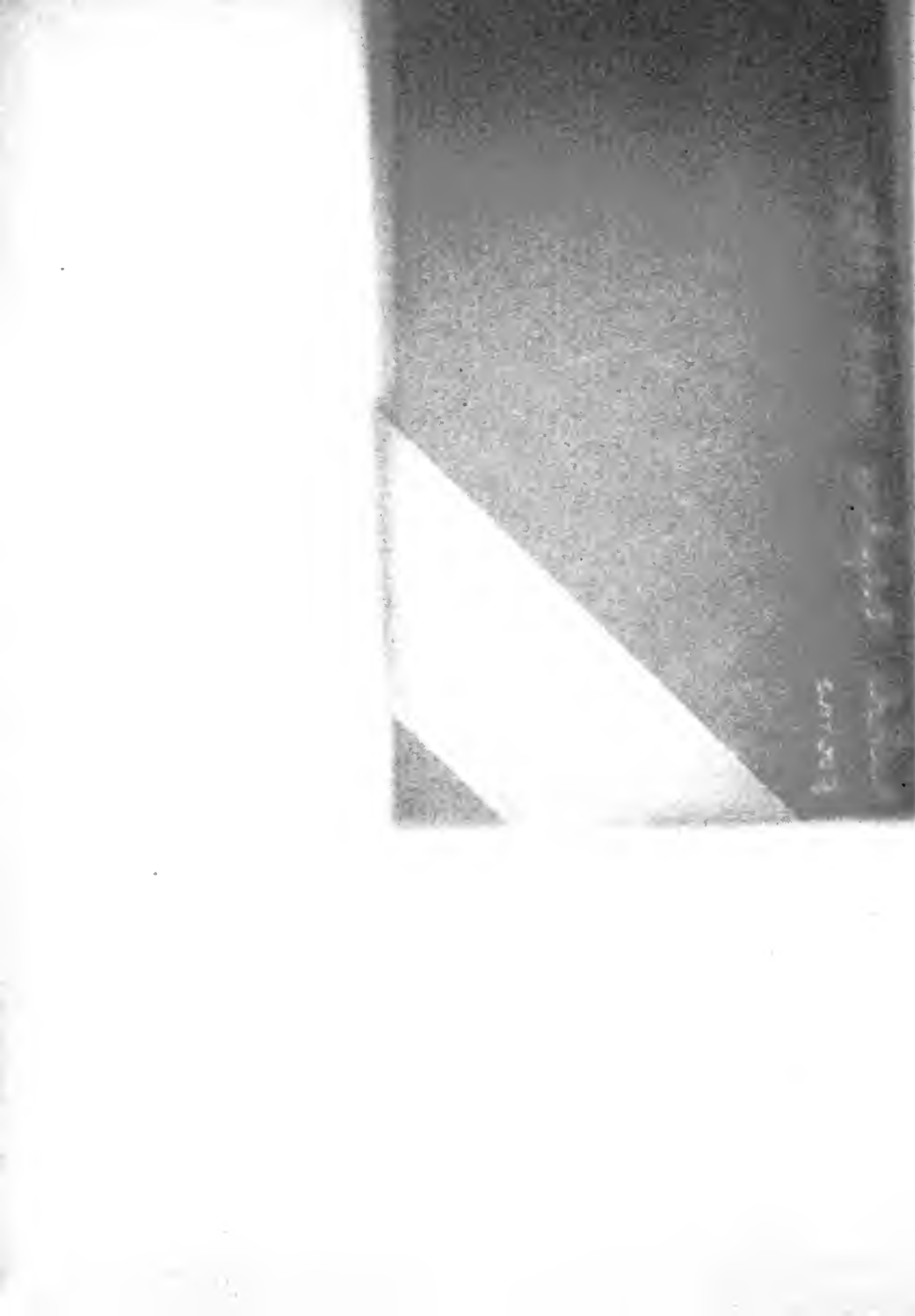
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